



PRESS RELEASE
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COURT OF APPEALS AFFIRMS GREATER MINISTRIES FRAUD CONVICTIONS

United States Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today that the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit has upheld the convictions of several principals of Greater Ministries International Church: Gerald Payne, Betty Payne, David Whitfield, Patrick Henry Talbert, and Haywood “Don” Hall. These defendants had been convicted in Tampa federal court on multiple fraud and money laundering charges as a result of the Church’s “gifting” program, through which the defendants had convinced Church members and others to “gift” money to the Church, fraudulently promising both that the donors would receive back double the amount of their “gift” and that substantial proceeds from the “gifts” would be used for charitable purposes. The Church took in more than \$400,000,000 in its fraudulent scheme, with each of the defendants realizing a substantial, personal profit.

The Court of Appeals did vacate Hall’s 185-month sentence, holding that the evidence did not support an enhancement to Hall’s sentence for abuse of a position of trust. As a result, Hall will be resentenced for his crimes. The Court of Appeals rejected sentencing challenges made by the other defendants.

Assistant United States Attorney Susan Rothstein-Youakim handled the appeal on behalf of the United States.